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SUBJECT: Media Reaction, O Globo newspaper, Obama overshadows Chavez

Article Title: Obama's Gestures

Rio-based center-right O Globo commented on page 06 of its April 21 issue: "one of the most noteworthy results from the Summit of the Americas ... was the fact that Barack Obama overshadowed the melodramatic Hugo Chavez. Obama was able to...offer a message of reconciliation in a cordial environment. For example when he praised the work of Cuban doctors in other countries and said that the U.S. should follow the example and send more than weapons to the region and to the rest of the world. And then when he saluted Evo Morales for being the first indigenous leader of a country with an indigenous majority.

Chvez ordered his partners at the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) - Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines - not to sign the final declaration of the summit. However, this gesture was irrelevant compared to Obama's statement that U.S. rivals in the region are not threats to American interests, and his promise to respect elected governments, regardless of ideological differences. The U.S. President's stance, open to dialogue, exhausted "Bolivarianism," which no longer has the "demon" characterized by George Bush, to exorcize.

Some Latin American leaders resorted to the ballad of accusing the U.S. for the problems of the continent, always in search of an outside guilty party for its problems. In those cases, President Lula's mediating behavior stood out, as seconded by Michele Bachelet (Chile) and Felipe Calderon (Mexico), who preferred not to emphasize the past, but to open possibilities for the future. This position was in tune with the message brought by Obama to Trinidad and Tobago. Brazil performed well, as it simply cannot take part in Chavist deliriums or engage in old-fashioned speeches against "imperialism," which only serve to uncover old inefficiencies of governments on the continent.

For his internal audience, Fidel Castro dismissed, characterizing as "charity," Obama's initiatives to reduce restrictions to travel and money transfers to Cuba. However, President Ral said he was willing to talk to the U.S. "about everything." If, in a historic gesture, he does so, he will certainly not want to have Chavez around. Then the caudillo will have to reinvent himself."

MARTINEZ